

## MELANIE KIM IS "KEEPING IT REAL" IN HER FIRST CALL

Word made its way to Dr. Timothy Son, associate professor of Christian education and youth ministry that Melanie Kim '12 was exploring her options for seminary. Professor Son encouraged Melanie to visit the campus and to seriously consider making PTS her place of study. In February 2009, she came for a campus visit and sat in the Prophets and Psalms class with Dr. Jerome Creach, as well as Homiletics with the President Carl and Dr. Steven Tuell. Melanie was caught up in the lectures and sensed a deep collegiality as students preached their final sermons for Homiletics. "I knew during my trip to Pittsburgh that not only was PTS going to be my place of study, but my home," says Melanie.



While in seminary Melanie learned all about the books of the Bible, the famous Church historians, and the sacraments, along with a long list of other topics in her classes. Perhaps most importantly, however, Melanie learned that she's a pastor. "I began my theological education somewhat reluctantly," she says. Having grown up with a clergy parent, Melanie worked hard to distance herself from the pastorate. "I held many mirrors up to myself through my studies, my relationships, my involvement with student organizations, my field education and pulpit supply work. What I continued to see peering back at every turn, was a pastor. Seminary equipped me to own my call and live into it with passion and imagination."

Melanie is now serving First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Fla., as the associate pastor. There she is involved in worship leadership, pastoral care, teaching, and resourcing various committees in the life of the church. This congregation is mission-minded and aims to live out radical hospitality. "The best part of my call is truly the people. We have a very gifted and capable staff which makes going into the office a complete joy," Melanie says. "The congregation members have been effusive with welcome and I feel truly blessed to partner with this congregation in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Being just a stone's throw from one of the prettiest beaches in the country is not too shabby either. God is good!"

In her call Melanie has learned that that ministry is not about playing the part of pastor or hiding behind the persona of pastor. Rather, ministry is fully embodied. "We bring our specific world views, our life experiences, and our unique witness of the Triune God into the various ministry contexts we are called to. I remind myself daily to keep it real and to be who I am, knowing that this is how I honor God and the church," she says.

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